OUR THOUGHT.

BY

GEORGE W. KEITH AND MARY A. READ.

STOUGHTON, MASS.,
1878.

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HE WHO THINKETH MY THOUGHT IS NO WISER THAN HE WAS AFORETIME; BUT HE IN WHOM MY THOUGHT BEGETTETH THOUGHT HATH PROFITED THEREBY.

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REALITIES.

Up to the present time people have not seen or felt spiritual realities. What they have taken to be such has been only the shadow, or, more properly speaking, the emanation, — the aura that goes forth from spiritual things. There have been, in all ages, occasional instances of people who, just previous to death, have seen and laid hold of spiritual realities; and I thought, it is impossible to live in the spiritual world and this world at the same time. When the spirit becomes so unfolded that spiritual things are positive in their action upon the man, it cannot longer abide in the body. But the spirit said to me, "No, you are wrong. It is possible."

All life is dual; and growth the result of the interaction of the dual principles. From the blending — the interchange — between the intellectual and animal natures, comes the development of spirituality. Heretofore, when spirituality has become the positive power, it has taken the spirit out of the body, because the man as a whole was not large enough to realize the equality of all things. In the eager desire to make the physical life secondary and tributary to the spiritual, injustice has been done the body; the consequent warfare between it and the spirit has resulted in dissolution. But when man has reached that point of development where each

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of the three natures desires only equality, only its just proportion of positive action, the trinity are in harmony, and can live together, a triune being.

One of the greatest hindrances to the development of spirituality in this age, is the lack of reverence; not for things called high and holy, but for the lower departments of our nature. When intellectual unfoldment causes us to lose respect for our animal nature, there ceases to be harmonious reciprocal action between them, and growth ceases. Intellectual acquisition may go on, but our collection of knowledge is an inanimate mass. We are like the miser heaping up riches we neither use nor need, and though possessing great knowledge, may be very ignorant. Intellectuality belongs to "the betweenity of things." It is the middle ground between the instinct of the animal and spontaneity, which results from a state of supremacy of the spirit. Impulse must not be confounded with spontaneity. It is a product of the interplay of the animal and intellectual forces. Intellect is the pivotal point, corresponding to the dead point of mechanics, on which many of our most cultured people are stuck fast. One leg cannot walk, and they who would progress must exercise both natures. The more equally they do so, the more rapid and harmonious will be their progression. By the animal nature, I mean not simply the sexual department of that nature, which, though the basis, is not the whole. I mean all that part of us inherited from the animal; by which, lying close to mother

earth, and fed from her bosom, warmed by the sunshine, fanned by the breeze, bathed by the rain, regaled by colors and odors, and nightly wrapped about by darkness and slumber, we are capable of a keen delight in simple existence; a capacity, alas! that has been so nearly educated out of men and women, that but for children we might almost doubt its existence. Whenever we find an organization where the animal and intellectual natures have preserved their balance, we find a man of weight and power. If he have large capacity, he becomes one of the great men of the world. Read Emerson's "Nature," and you will find the key that unlocks the mystery of his superior development.

To make a quick and prosperous voyage over the unknown sea of life, we must not only spread our sails to catch the winds of heaven; but must look well to the ballast in the hold.

WHO CAN BE A COMMUNIST.

Until a man is willing to change places with his servant, he is not fit for communistic life. A prerequisite for such willingness is a loving recognition of justice as the governing principle of the universe. He will then be as receptive to truth that touches himself, as to that which touches his neighbor; and if there comes the intellectual perception that the *rôle* he is now playing is out of harmony

with justice, he will have no desire to retain it. He will rather choose to be tossed hither and thither, up or down, so that he finds the place rightly his, where he accords with God.

The condition of longing desire indicates an object unattained. Those who most eagerly desire a communal home are usually those who most need, because they least possess, the communal spirit. When one has reached the development that makes him really a communist, he lives that life, even though he be solitary. Those are best capable of practical communism, to whom that life has ceased to be an object of feverish desire.

WOMAN.

In speaking of woman we approach the infinite. She is unlimited — therefore indefinite, not to be compassed by speech. Any attempt to present a complete and definite view of her nature must fail in proportion as it is definite.

Humanity is a unit; and within this unism lies enfolded a perfect dualism,—masculine and feminine,—corresponding to the dualism of positive and negative in the world of unembodied forces. The correspondence between mankind and the physical world is very perfect. Much time and effort has been expended by reformers in arguing for the equality of woman. Had they been themselves

more thoroughly penetrated with that truth, they could not have said so much about it. Some truths are self-evident, if evident at all. They do not admit of argument or proof. In full majestic beauty they stand awaiting recognition. We may call attention to them, but to eyes that are blind they cannot be demonstrated. That manhood and womanhood balance each other, is one of this kind. Yet when I compare man and woman to the positive and negative poles, to day and night, I convey to many the idea of a comparison derogatory to woman; for while the material husk that envelopes our consciousness is thick, only positive things — those which strike hard — can penetrate.

It is only as we wear thin the covering of our spirits and open the doors of intuition and spirituality, that the more subtile negative forces command equal recognition.

Men and women possess the same qualities, in which appears their unity; but their modes of manifestation are unlike, showing the dualism. Man manifests his greatest strength in action, direct and positive. Woman manifests hers in endurance, passive and negative. We can see the first at a glance; the comprehension of the last is a slower process spread through a longer time. In the intellectual world, man's strength appears in projecting thoughts and ideas; woman's in the capacity to receive thoughts and ideas. In love, he makes the active manifestations, she is receptive and responsive. His nature is centrifugal; hers is

centripetal. The perfect adaptation of men and women to each other, the marvellous interplay of all their qualities and faculties, the balance of each part and of the whole, when once perceived with clear vision, wraps the whole subject of sex in an atmosphere of reverence and awe that silences at once and forever the conceited intellect that would flippantly unfold the law of its divine mystery.

Co-ordinate in entity, in manifestation, man, corresponding to action, precedes woman, corresponding to reaction.

In the physical world man is the pioneer; he builds the house, then woman makes in it a home. He furnishes the external — the form; she the interior — the spirit. The same correspondence runs through the mental and moral world. In the readjustment of society man must give form to the enterprise, must furnish the material, while woman supplies the inspiration — the spirit. In whatever work is to be jointly done (and, in the large sense, all work is joint work), he must take the first step. Woman's daintier foot will be quick to follow. Until he has done his part she is helpless; she can do nothing, except partially and imperfectly. In the human body, if one lung is destroyed, the other fulfils as best it can the office of both; so with one eye, and even, we are told, with one hemisphere of the brain. In like manner, one half of the human duality can live and labor without the co-operation of the other. Necessity develops an imperfect and limping dualism in each sex. The latent positive-

ness in the woman is brought into activity, and the interplay between the two portions of her own nature keeps up motion and life. But it is a maimed and imperfect life, as is the corresponding condition in man. If he does not receive womanly response, if his action is not followed by reaction, it is like beating the air, exhausting and unproductive.

Man's superior size is a fact full of significance. He is larger than woman, that he may surround, encompass, and comprehend her. Man may be compared to a square, and woman to an inscribed circle. He views her from the exterior toward the centre; she reverses the process and sees him from within, beginning at the heart. When men are manly, when the square is perfect, it is inevitable that women will be womanly, that the sphere will be round and full. It is when men fail to keep their harmonious proportions that women become distorted also—they cannot help it. The first inalienable right of woman is good men. Given that, she will ask no other, because to her it comprehends all. Woman is as helpless in the hands of man in the sphere of mental and moral life as in that of the physical; and womanhood stands pleading with outstretched hands of supplication, "Oh! ensphere me with protection and love! Keep me womanly; for only then can I be to you what your soul desires." Man's nature responds in a dumb, blind fashion, and he looks about him to see what to do. As with the individual, so with the race.

Man is not content with himself unless woman is satisfied with him. The woman's rights clamor has forced the fact upon his attention that she is not satisfied. He is irritated and provoked, and calls her unreasonable; but all the time he is trying, honestly, if awkwardly, to satisfy her. His manly instinct tells him that the thing demanded in her name is not what she wants. He sees that she could do nothing with the ballot if he gave it her. Indeed, his own invention, it has proved more than he can manage himself. Viewing woman from the outside, he sees clearly her adaptations to external things; but her inner heart is to him an unknown world. Of that great, throbbing, aching void he is profoundly unconscious. Not having penetrated to the law of her being, he fails to comprehend its outward manifestations, and finds her changeable, inconsequent, unreasonable; and either charmingly incomprehensible or exasperatingly so, according to the color of the glasses through which he views her. On the other hand, woman, though knowing the heart of man, is never able to calculate the method of its crystallizing into action. A mutual comprehension between the sexes is a prerequisite to the harmonious adjustment of their relations. Here, as everywhere, man must take the lead. He must invite woman to reveal herself — must make a place in himself for the revelation she is longing to utter, but cannot till he has done so. Each sex longs for and needs comprehension by the other; for each sees more clearly into the recesses of its

own nature when interpreted to itself by the other. The two great obstacles to a better understanding are, that man does not aspire to comprehend woman, and that woman does not see that man is an equal sufferer with herself from present oppressive conditions.

Woman suffers not so much from man's oppression of herself, as from the legitimate effects of the barbarity of men to each other. They quarrel, make war, and kill each other by thousands, and she is left husbandless. They have destroyed manhood by ruthlessly crowding each other into poverty and vice, and, by offering a premium for human machines, have put it at a discount, until there is not enough of the manly element left in society to preserve its equipoise. It is a fact, that woman desires to be held, owned, and governed. It is also a fact, that man delights in doing it; but he must grow into the spirit of freedom, until he wants to hold and govern her only *because* she desires it, and only *so far* as she desires it. When we love freedom so well that we would as lief be slaves as tyrants, these relations between the sexes will all adjust themselves. When we speak the word freedom, we have touched the tap-root of all reform.

When this point of evolution has been reached, we shall see a government in which woman can, and will, have a part; but the present bone of contention, the ballot, will have been cast aside. A majority will not desire to enforce its will upon a

minority. A government of force based upon the spirit of control, will have been superseded by one organized in the spirit of justice, its office to provide protection. Penal institutions will have given place to reformatories, from which the idea of punishment will have been eliminated. The church, its occupation gone of saving souls from a wrathful God, will have resolved itself into social circles for mutual criticism and spiritual unfoldment. Domestic animals will be kept only when it is for their advantage as well as ours, and used only in just requital for the care and protection we afford them.

Poverty will have vanished from the earth, for the distribution of the results of labor will have been organized on a basis of justice. In short, man, instead of striving to construct a system of things after his own idea, will have accepted God's plan, and turned his energies to removing the obstructions he has himself introduced. He will stand aside and *let* "God's will be done."

Does this fair life look afar off, O ye aspiring yet doubting ones? It may begin this very hour in your hearts and lives. Loving freedom, loving justice, and living as near to them as is possible, your lives shall send forth a breath of the Divine Will, an influence more potent than any contagion of evil, and before which it must flee away like the shades of night before the rising sun.

SCIENTIFIC PROPAGATION.

The reproductive instinct in men and women is that which links them most closely with God — the great creative power in Nature. It is the basic instinct; universal, indestructible, the innermost of the citadel of life. Like the forces of external nature, it is in harmony with the law of its own existence, and is amenable to no other.

The tides rise and fall, the winds blow and die away. Rivers rise and flow to the sea which replenishes them again. Human intellect observes these facts, collects and classifies them, and is able to predict their recurring manifestations. The result of this labor we call Science. So in the larger and wiser future awaiting us, men may observe reverently the wonderful facts of reproduction; will note attractions and repulsions, calculate the effect of surrounding influences, and foretell with more or less accuracy, the probable result upon population, as our signal service predicts the coming storm or clear weather.

As we have outgrown the age when a papal bull is issued to stay a comet, so shall we outgrow the age of legal enactments and scientific formulas to regulate reproduction. The elements indulgently allow us to play with them, and use them for our petty ends. We imprison a piece of the wind, and force it through a little flue; we condense a few

cubic yards of vapor; we turn the river aside to run a mill or water a garden patch, and in our foolish conceit fancy we control the elements. But the tide rises and falls, the stream flows or dries up at its source, the hurricane sweeps over land and sea and sinks into calm with beneficent disregard of our little wishes or wills. So has infinite wisdom decreed that the reproductive instinct should be beyond the control of our wills, as it is beyond the comprehension of our intellects.

In the love-nature lies the channel by which we may come *en rapport* with the Eternal. Here, if at all, we make acquaintance with our souls.

Creation deals with essences. Only that which is vital, real, passes through its crucible. Not what the man and woman do, not what they know or possess, enters into the child; only what they are. All that is artificial in the parents is burned away in the process. Sometimes there is but little left. The only way to improve the race is to improve ourselves.

In the true sense there is but one creative principle in the universe. It seeks expression through men and women. To meddle with it, to interpose obstacles, hindrances, or checks to its natural manifestations, is to attempt to thwart and outwit nature.

Instead of trying to bring the reproductive element under the control of the intellect and will, and cunningly twisting its manifestations to suit our convenience under existing conditions, we must

let it be free, and turn our ingenuity into its legitimate sphere of exercise, — that of providing for whatever necessities may ensue. The would-be reformers and harmonizers of society begin at the wrong end, in trying to twist nature into harmony with existing civilization, instead of remodelling its man-made institutions. We can comprehend that which we have made, and it looms colossal before our admiring gaze. Nature — that which made us — we cannot comprehend ; therefore we fall into the error of thinking it a trivial obstacle to our wishes, and one that our efforts can remove.

The whole man and woman go to make up a child, — nothing can be left out or put in at will. The whole is greater than a part, and no man can intellectually comprehend his whole being, still less that of another; therefore it is impossible he should foresee the result of the blending of those two unknown elements. Before the instinct of attraction, the attitude of the intellect should be that of a reverent listener. When in the inner depths of man's nature springs up the desire for creation, and woman's being echoes responsive, the result of their spontaneous action is always and inevitably good. It is the effort of the intellect to evade, escape, or circumvent the order of nature, that produces the existing inharmony in sexual relations.

When a man is living purely in the external, he does well, from his own standpoint, to exercise reason in these matters ; but if he would lift his life

into relations with the Eternal, he must hold both intellect and desire in abeyance, and let the soul speak through the body, — that is, act spontaneously. No man can write the formula of sexual law. It is already written by the wisdom that is higher than ours. We have only to read from the Book of Nature, — and the unlettered man can do that as well as the learned; can as well walk in the straight and narrow path of nature's law, for which no broad road of science's building will serve as a substitute.

One of the greatest hindrances to progress is believing we possess absolute truth, instead of realizing the impossibility of our finite minds containing anything more than the shadow of infinite causation and eternal truth.

Highest of all the attributes of our nature, stands justice. It sounds the key-note, and all our faculties and desires must come into harmony with it before discord and suffering can be banished from our lives.

While the spheres of labor of men and women are interdependent and associated, they are also distinct, and refuse to blend into a hermaphroditic unity. When actual *labor* is the central interest, each sex instinctively prefers to work by itself.

FATHERS AND MOTHERS.

Why do moralists so exalt the office of maternity, and say nothing of paternity? "Woman, the moulder of our destinies!" "Woman, the redeemer and savior of the race!" "By virtue of her sacred office of maternity, throned upon the right hand of the Creator!" I have listened to such rhapsodical compositions of an hour's duration, that did not even hint that man had any share in the honor of creating a human being. His responsibility is usually limited to affectionate and obedient service to the prospective mother, — the "queen in the realm of the affections." All this is morbid sentimentality, having its root in foolish conceit in woman and cowardice, that shirks rightful responsibility, in man.

It is not a fact that woman wields a greater influence in forming the race than man. The male element is the positive. It stamps itself not only upon the offspring, but upon the plastic nature of the female. Stock-breeders recognize this fact, and conform their practice to it.

Many physiologists have noted the manifestations of the law among men and women. Strongly marked illustrations have occurred in the intermarriage of the black and white races. Researches into the law of inheritance have developed many interesting facts; but, without going into detail, I will simply say, I do not recall a single instance of a

great man who had an *insignificant* father. I do not know of one great woman, mated with a man decidedly her inferior, who has produced children equal to herself.

Woman may be likened to a mould in which a thing is cast, man furnishing the material; and according to the material will be the kind of product. Pour gold into a mould of clay, and it will come out gold, however ill-shapen; but put mud into a golden mould, and it will still be mud. I am not arguing for the superiority of fatherhood. To my eyes, paternity and maternity are inevitably equal. The moral of it all is, that man should realize the importance of keeping himself clean and fit to beget children, and that it will not help him to do so to belittle his share in forming the character of his offspring.

SEXUAL SCIENCE.

To none of the teachers of sexual science have I turned deaf ears. I believe myself receptive, yet am I not enlightened. I see their theories to be superficial and external. They do not cover the facts of experience. The men who have seemed to me the wisest, have frankly admitted that while they had learned a few facts, the underlying philosophy was still unknown to them. The man who has had experience, who has studied and observed

and recorded his observations, comprehends it no more than the simple and uneducated. I know no more what is the law of sexuality to-day than I did when I was fifteen. I only know that the way to all truth lies through freedom. If a man asks me, "To whom shall I go to learn the right way?" I should say, go to no one. If he ask, "What shall I do to do right?" I should say, you know better than any one else can tell you.

The one thing that I see to be necessary in sexual matters is, to be let alone, and to let ourselves alone; stop prying and meddling and theorizing. If a man finds himself possessed of an excess of amative development, it is simply a fact. It cannot be altered, save by a gradual process of growth that shall enable other qualities in his nature to balance it. It is better for the man, and safer for society, that it should burn itself out in natural methods, than that it should be forcibly repressed. The receipts of scientists and moralists may succeed in exchanging an abnormal manifestation for a different one, but it will be abnormal still. "So you justify an excessively amative husband in imposing himself upon his wife to any extent?" No. I should have no marriage that would *allow* of any such imposition. I believe in individual freedom.

The best growth of my life — the development which is of the most value — has come to me through a spiritual illumination that has enabled

me *sometimes* to act spontaneously in sexual matters, — absolutely without thought of consequences, without desire to escape or evade them.

Change is external — belongs to the appearance of things. Spring gives place to summer, and summer to autumn, and autumn to winter. What a change in the face of nature! But the spirit is not changed, and buds forth anew in the same round of manifestation. So is the spirit of man unchangeable. There is no divorce in the world of realities. Whatever marriage there ever was, is now, and ever must be. What portion of universal womanhood my nature has an affinity for, is mine. No other man can take it from me. I can in no way lose it. I have nothing to fear.

The oftener a person can change his present mating for a more perfect one, the better. There is life, there is growth in change. When a marriage is externally dissolved, both carry with them all that was real of the joy, the happiness, the *use* of that marriage. In a new union, each has a chance to give forth something never before demanded — to receive something never before received.

Before one can do anything with these principles, he must be grounded in freedom. No one who is not free can tell whether a new attraction is a more perfect mating or not. He must be free to go, he must be free to stay. I have never met any one who impressed me as free in both halves of this proposition. When one thus free finds a new marriage, it proves that the old one was ended.

LEGAL MARRIAGE.

I recognize the fact, that the average marriage, with its binding legal bond, is the natural expression of the average man and woman, and therefore is right for them. If I show the world that I have something better, it will perceive its superiority only as the average of manhood and womanhood is raised. It is not the institution of marriage that is at the root of the matter, but the undeveloped natures of men and women which express themselves in the institution.

If I psychologize or persuade a person to dispense with the legal bond, who would naturally express himself by making use of it, I do that person an injury, and retard his progress. Such as are held in chains by fear of society's frown, need the suffering those bonds will bring them to develop their courage, — their individuality. No person can free another. "Himself must strike

the blow." Then we may aid him to maintain his footing, and render it firm and stable.

Advocates of social freedom, who suffer on account of social ostracism, are to be pitied, perhaps, but they are not yet sons of freedom, nor is their love of it yet stronger than their love of popular approbation. The only legitimate cause of complaint is when the law lays its strong hand of force upon our liberty. We must learn cordially to recognize the right of people to dispense with our society, if they do not find it desirable. The right of exclusion is one of the first rights of individuals, and one of the first lessons in freedom.

What possible cause of grievance is it if society, finding us out of harmony with itself, falls away from us? Can we not grant to others so much of the freedom we claim for ourselves?

The work of the social reformer is to free himself from all bonds, and then to assist others in their efforts to do the same; not to persuade people to be free before they desire to be, before they are fit to be. The beauty and joy of a free life is contagious. No precaution can prevent its spread. If we are free, if we are loving, every one who comes into our sphere will feel it, and be more free and loving for it.

The world is not yet far enough advanced to furnish practical examples of free love. A few have caught sight of the light, but they see it

through the medium of the filth in which they have been educated, and in which they live, and their efforts to exemplify it are marked by manifestations of the lower plane where they now are.

None of us have learned more than the a, b, c of freedom. Do we know any more of love? How can we, until we are free?

UNWELCOME CHILDREN.

This is a combination of words that belongs to existing civilization, and is its product. It is unknown to unadulterated nature. Artificial conditions have raised the price of children till they "cost too much." If we would divorce this unnatural conjunction, we must so revise the dictionary of civilization, that a large family will no longer be the synonyme for poverty and deprivation, for overwork, sickness, premature age, and death. Does this seem an impossible task? It will be found easier than revising the laws of nature. The environments of society and government, with their conditions of finance and politics, customs and habits, look so irresistible, and are so impossible for the individual to overcome, that when they conflict with natural instincts we try to bend the latter. We forget the source of the two. One is the voice of nature, — the Almighty, — the other of a combination of men. Against the first, all the

inhabitants of the globe cannot prevail; but what human combination has done, human co-operation can undo.

If we would have welcome children, we must remove those conditions which have transformed the crowning joy of human life into a burden too grievous to be borne. There is no reason in the nature of things, why the rearing and providing for a family of children should bear any more heavily upon the parents than it does upon a pair of our feathered songsters to rear their little brood. The labor bears no greater proportion to the power of the laborers. We might learn many lessons from the birds, were we not too puffed up with intellectual pride. Lessons of government, of just distribution of natural wealth, of individual rights, of co-operation, of freedom, of love and sexual purity, of spontaneity, of faith and trust and happiness. There is such a distance between our feathered brothers and sisters and us. Is it up or down? In all the things I have named, they are nearer to nature — to God — than are we. Extremes meet — and when man shall have unfolded the divine possibilities of his spiritual nature, he will be nearer to the birds in many things than to the man and woman of to-day.

To have welcome children, we must learn to reverence our bodies, and keep them healthy and able to do their creative work easily and well. Surrounded by the conditions our natures demand, the bearing and rearing of children is an experi-

ence that opens the way for both fathers and mothers to the highest developments and most thrilling joys.

To have welcome children, we must remove both the artificial barriers to the free expression of creative desire, and the artificial temptations and incitements to it. And, lastly, we must develop individually such a respect for manhood and womanhood, and for its crowning manifestation in sex, as to readjust the present inverted table of values, placing realities above artificialities, — the *man* above the merchant, artisan, or politician, — the *woman* above the lecturer, housekeeper, or votary of fashion.

The Red-breasted Robin.

The red-breasted robin wooed him a wife
When the leaves were young,
And swelled his throat till I thought it would burst
As he joyous sung.

He brought her home to our apple-tree, love,
When the bloomy snow
Was thick on the bough, and dropping down
On the green below.

Together they builded a marvellous nest,
Well hidden from view;
And proudly and lovingly placed within
Four ovals of blue.

Then softly nestled the lady-bird down
On her treasures rare,
Pressing them warmly, both day and night,
With her bosom fair.

Sits she silent and still, while the song of her mate
Rises loud and clear;
Yet, I think she whispers her great content
In his listening ear.

And, dear, if you'll bend close down to my lips,
I'll teach them to say
What measureless happiness swells in my breast
Through the livelong day.

But ah! the words are not fashioned to tell
The joy of your wife,
As she bears 'neath her heart the wonderful gift
Of a double life!

EDUCATION.

They say "'tis education forms the common mind," and we never stop to consider whether it is best to have our "common minds" formed by education or not. I have an idea that it is better to let the mind educate itself, than to have it educated by whatsoever educator circumstances give the authority to act in that capacity. We are taught in childhood to look upon our teachers as positively wise, and to believe they can pour into us as much golden knowledge, set with diamonds of wisdom, as we can contain. It takes us many years to rid ourselves of the verbiage we allow to come into our minds, believing it to be useful knowledge and truth. Education, as it now is, means stuffing our heads with theories that have grown out of a bad chemical admixture of education

and organic tendency in somebody's brain. People seem to think it makes very little difference how, so long as you are educated. The child's head must be filled full of something, and is often crammed till it bursts. Stuff his brain with theology as fast as possible, of the kind of which he seems to hold the most, and which is most available, to the end that he may become a bright and shining light, command a large salary, and reflect honor upon his parents and teachers. Or educate him for a lawyer, or at West Point for a military life. Make him some kind of a machine that will grind out a name and fame. Shut him up in college and stuff him until he is fattened with the drippings of morbid mentalities, just as you stuff your pig until he cannot walk, and your goose until it cannot fly. Feed him theology, materia medica, military tactics, or law, — anything of which he will imbibe the most freely and retain the largest quantity. Take Nature's divine work out of her hands. Be his wet-nurse, and poison him with the corrupt lactage of a false education, so we will soon become a nation of educated fools.

We are all so much inclined to live wholly upon that which is sweetest to us, forgetting the law that necessitates variety, that our thoughts, our loves, and our lives become diseased, and we are unfit for the reception of the clear, pure waters of inspiration.

OBSCENE LITERATURE.

Some well-meaning people, spiritual descendants of the pious Fathers of the Inquisition, have formed a Society for the Suppression of Vice. The spirit of persecution, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever, has just now turned its attention from religion to morals, and, substituting vice for heresy, is striving, with the old familiar bigotry and imbecility, to suppress results without touching causes.

It strives to plaster up the ill-smelling ulcer on the social body, sprinkles a little perfumery, and congratulates itself upon its remarkable success.

The natural outlet is always the safest. There is a diseased condition of society that produces a demand for obscene books and pictures. They are one of the outlets for its impure waters. Damming them up with penal statutes is building a reservoir whose embankments are foreordained to break amid devastation and ruin.

Whom is it feared obscene publications will injure? Surely not Christian young men, guarded by the church, redeemed by Christ, converted from the error of their ways? The naturally pure-minded are repelled in disgust. They are powerless upon all in whom the morbid appetite to which they appeal does not already exist. What if they do hasten its outward manifestation? They can do no more. How do we know but it is the quickest

way for the man to get rid of his unfortunate inheritance? What if he is incited to suicidal practices, that take him to the next life before his prime? Do we know how it will be with him there? And will the world be worse off than if he trod the prescribed path, transmitting to offspring his own abnormal appetites, intensified from suppression?

Obscene literature will be produced and will be circulated in spite of all efforts to suppress it, so long as there is a demand for it. Only when no one wants such books ought they to cease to be printed. It is the right of the individual to read such books as he chooses, and to do what he chooses with himself. If he chooses to go to hell, no power in the universe has the right to prohibit him. It is a necessity for him to experience hell, until he has got enough of it and begins to ask for heaven.

The supposed right of suppression rests upon egotistic belief in one's own infallible wisdom. The thing to be suppressed is decided by the opinion of the party that happens to have most power. Thus a class of writers who believe themselves to be moral teachers are as honestly believed by others to be immoral and obscene. As the latter class happens to be the stronger, in full faith that might makes right, it arrests, fines, imprisons, and suppresses the weaker. But, far in advance as are these social reformers, are they entirely free from the spirit of persecution? Would they not pass on the blow they have received to a class still weaker

than themselves? "Much as I have suffered from this law, I would favor its modification, rather than its repeal," writes one. That is, he would have it so modified as not to "take off the heads of our best people as well as the hind-quarters of vermin." Liberal, philanthropic, enlightened, and cultivated as is this good man, such an utterance shows he has not yet stepped over the boundary line where his feet can rest upon the bed-rock of freedom, — *thine* as sacred as mine.

On my first visit to New York, an inexperienced backwoods boy, fresh and verdant, I had one of these objectionable books thrust in my face by a sleek, light-complexioned, mild-looking young fellow, in general appearance not unlike the young men I see nowadays going in and out of the rooms of the Christian Association. He asked me to buy. "No, sir," said I, politely; "I don't want it," and passed on. But in a moment he was again at my side, displaying the book and repeating his invitation. "No," said I again, "I don't want your book." But he persisted, and followed me the length of a square, frequently repeating his solicitation. I wanted to go about my business, and he impeded my progress; and more, he attempted to exercise for me my choice of what I would do. It made no difference to me what he tried to force upon me; if it had been the Bible, it would have been all the same. It had not occurred to me to feel insulted at his invitation, any more than by the placards in the saloon windows, inviting me to "Walk in.

Brandy three cents a glass." A little mathematical calculation showed me that brandy at three cents a glass was of necessity a counterfeit, a spurious compound, gotten up to produce temporary insanity. I saw that it appealed to one morbid appetite, as the obscene book did to another, and that of the two, the bad brandy was by far the most powerful for evil, being surer to reach, by an indirect course, the sexual passions, than was the obscene book by its direct appeal. I knew the barkeeper was licensed by our Christian government to sell his wares, and I supposed the young man was also; though, now that I have had more experience, I suppose he was either an honestly illegal vender, or else a decoy,—an agent of some virtuous society of suppression, endeavoring to inveigle me into the meshes of the modern inquisition. I never thought of either liquor or book as a temptation or a danger. All that made any impression upon my mind was the persistent effort of the young man to intrude upon my personal liberty; and it was well for us both that he accepted my refusal at the moment he did, for though I have never carried any deadly weapons, I should have found effectual means to defend my right to walk the highway unmolested. It was well for him, because he would probably have got hurt. It was well for me, because our free government would probably have punished me for defending my right to freedom.

Is there, then, nothing that can be done to "stay the tide of immorality, that is sweeping our country

to destruction?" If the country goes to destruction, it will be because it needs to go.; because nothing better than destruction is possible. Only one thing can overcome vice, and that is virtue; only purity can cleanse impurity. If we, individually, are pure, and in proportion as we are pure, our lives will radiate a perfume subtle and powerful. This atmosphere impurity cannot breathe. Either it will flee away, or, by the wondrous chemistry of the spirit, will be transformed.

Why so many reformers are left behind in the march of progress, till the radical of to-day becomes the conservative of to-morrow, is because they undertake to look after effects. Enthusiastically they present their morsel of wisdom to the world; and because the world does not see its importance as they do, they repeat it a little louder, and keep on repeating it *ad infinitum*. Meantime the world moves right on; and by the time a sufficient number of people have reached the standpoint of our reformers to render their cause triumphant, others are far ahead, receiving and giving forth new perceptions of truth, for them in their turn to denounce and combat.

THOUGHT AND ACTION.

Thought is unlimited, is linked with the infinite. It seeks expression through the finite body, and the result is action, — necessarily limited. In thought, it is possible to be absolutely true; but our lives can only be as nearly true as our organization will permit. Most of us commit the fatal error of not thinking any more truly than we are able to act, — of limiting our conceptions to the possibility of present actualization. By thus playing fast and loose with truth, we lose the power to distinguish between it and its counterfeit. We shall continue to do so as long as we prefer to preserve our self-complacency, rather than our mental integrity.

Putting men into prisons can never make them any better, so long as they are shut away from the society of women. Our prisons shut out everything that is purifying and elevating, and shut in all that is impure and debasing. The evil in the man has no chance to escape, and however small the germ of sin may be when he enters this fruitful cesspool of evil, it will, in time, penetrate his whole being, and stain every faculty of his spirit.

STIMULANTS.

If I were a moral teacher, I would not advise anybody to use tobacco, or wine and intoxicating liquors; and I could never advise any one not to use them. I believe it is just as pure and righteous to make use of tobacco and wine as of meat and vegetables, and just as ignoble to be a slave to the one as the other. I don't believe it is a necessity to use them every day, or for every person; and I believe there are some people so organized as never to be benfited by their use. I believe these stimulants have all been useful, and have been a necessity to the growth and development of mankind.

Now, to give a reason for my belief. There is in the spirit of man a constant yearning for something he does not possess. It is called aspiration when it is for something we think high and holy; that is, when this involuntary prayer of the spirit asks for something above the level of our earthly surroundings. In the man whose spirit yearns to conquer nations or rule peoples, we call it ambition. One is intellect touched by spirituality, the other, intellect modified by animality.

Now, there is a yearning of the body corresponding with the desire of the spirit always; and unless the body, which is the basis for the spirit to work from, receives in some way the stimulus which is the answer to its prayer, the spirit cannot act.

The same stimulating power, acting upon different organizations, produces different results, in harmony with the material acted upon. The man with very large veneration, under the influence of wine, becomes reverential and prayerful. If he is combative, it makes him fight; if amative, it makes him lustful. If he has large benevolence, it makes him generous, open-handed, and lavish. If he has an ambition to be a public speaker, it sets him to making a speech. The liquor is not responsible for the direction or quality of the man's action. It simply sets him in motion, and the direction he takes is in harmony with his leading characteristics or propensities.

If a man under the influence of liquor does a deed which we call evil, he is brought face to face with a manifestation of himself from which he recoils, and a magnetic current is set in motion from caution to the organs which have been unduly active, which tends to produce equalization. Every manifestation which is an action of what is called an evil propensity, reacts upon the man as a whole; and when action shall have been violent enough to produce a reaction that shall level up other qualities until they balance those which have been in excess, such manifestations will cease. Stimulus simply accelerates the process, — makes it more rapid and violent.

A few who read this will see it as we do, will understand it; but many will not. Some will think we advocate the use of tobacco, tea, coffee,

and spirituous liquors; but to such we would say, as you understand the advocacy of a practice, we do not.

MURDER.

Murder does not have the same significance to me that it did years ago. When I take up a daily paper and read the list of murders, I feel that it is in perfect keeping with the intellectual development of the age, — in fine harmony with the rules and regulations, the laws, politics, religion, habits, and customs of men's present condition of *un*civilization.

The benefit I receive from the perusal of the daily accounts of the illegal and legal killing of men and women is this: it gives me an opportunity to compare that manifestation of intellectualized animals with the same of five, ten, or fifty years ago, so that I may estimate the time necessary for this expression of pagan and Christian humanity to reach its divine maximum; which will be my data for calculating the end thereof.

Yes, I say murders are necessary. If you do not believe it, let me point you to the joyful expression upon the newsboy's face, and, if you are clairvoyant and can see his spirit, to the warm, bright-colored rays of hope which come pouring in to animate and inspire his cold, cheerless, sinking life, when the fourth edition announces a first-class Fifth-

avenue or Beacon-street murder. Greedily the news-hungry crowd snatch from his cold little hand the paper, and with delight the shivering newsvender pockets the price. A thousand newsboys are made happy by this distribution of pennies caused by the timely death of one rich man; and a thousand families to-night are fed that otherwise went supperless. A thousand sinking little hearts take fresh courage, and in their happy dreams, visions of great successes, of bank accounts, of stores and shops, and happy homes, are theirs. The levelling process, equalization, is constantly going on. Man's monopolies of the means of happiness are being dissolved by the breath of divine wisdom and goodness. Two or three homes are covered with a pall of sorrow, that rich blessings may fall upon a thousand others.

"Am I sure that divine wisdom and goodness causes all this to take place?" If not, tell me what does.

Moral liberty will yet be recognized as the equal of religious liberty, — freedom of action equally as sacred as freedom of opinion. Any and every act lies solely and absolutely between the man and his God, until he infringes upon the rights of some other individual, when his action ceases to be a manifestation of freedom, and becomes tyranny.

THE WORLD'S SAVIORS.

Those who have claimed to be the saviors of the world have been the destroyers. They advance a theory and call it absolute truth. They claim to be inspired by God, Allah, Brahma, or great intelligences that cannot err, and all must believe or be damned. Moses wrote the ten commandments as directed by Jehovah, and all the world must accept them and act accordingly. Jesus, with his large self-esteem and powerfully psychological temperament, pompously said, "I am the light." "He that believeth on *me;*" and poor humanity has felt his influence all through the ages that have passed since he spoke, and expecting a great reward for believing on Jesus, have neglected to cultivate their own individualities, feeling that it was easier, as well as safer, to simply believe Jesus would take better care of them than they could take of themselves. So the prophets and seers of to-day point to their inspirations from infallible wisdom, their vocabularies of eternal truth, saying, "Believe, practise, and your sins shall be washed away; nevertheless, do as you like, you are free to believe or not, but herein lies *the truth.*

Thousands do believe already; have buried themselves in spiritualistic theories, and shutting out the sun of progress, lie supinely upon their backs, caught between the holy lids of their new bible.

There will they lie till some more potent wave rolling in with the tide of progression, shall rouse them from their lethargic spiritual slumbers.

MUSIC.

The popular music of the day is an intellectual manifestation, not an expression of the spirit as people usually think. It is the sugar that sweetens intellectual life. The singing of birds and insects is in harmony with nature. Most of the singing and playing of men and women is in harmony with the artificiality of this intellectual age. The greatest singers and players, or those who have the greatest reputation, are standing upon the central point between the spontaneity of simple nature and the spontaneity of spiritualized life, which we have not yet reached. When we have, we shall not be satisfied with singing another man's songs. Music read from books is artificial. In the higher spiritual spheres of being to which we are all tending, we shall read our music from the mountains and valleys, the meadows and streams. The snowflakes and raindrops, the eyes of birds and butterflies, and the bright stars will be our musical notes, from which the soul of song dwelling in each separate nature will flow as freely and as sweetly as the crystal streams of angel love.

POLITICS.

The United States comprises a broad territory, peopled by a variety of races and nationalities. There is, in consequence, a great diversity of opinion upon all subjects comprised in politics, religion, and morals. A government that shall justly represent such a people must have a very broad foundation, — must reach down to the bed-rock of first principles. As it at present exists, it is too narrow for the people; and unless it proves elastic, capable of broadening and enlarging to their necessities, they will burst it in pieces as inevitably as the expanding germ bursts the seed-husk that encloses it. In a country like ours, no sectarian, no one who is pledged to any special system of religion, school of politics, or code of morals, should be eligible to office. Our legislators should be selected with as careful regard to their freedom from prejudice or bias as our jurymen. As our elections are now managed, no man can take his seat in the senate, house of representatives, or State legislature, till he has sold out his freedom to form, or change an opinion, and act in conscientious accordance therewith.

Can we expect to be well served till we select men whom we can trust to act from their own wisdom and conscience, in the inevitably unforeseen emergencies that are always arising? No man can

do his best in any department of life unless he is trusted, unless he is believed in. He needs that inspiration. We should repose a generous confidence in our public servants until they fail in capacity or integrity. Then we should discharge them at once, and put others in their places. Do not all men wish that the places of public trust shall be held by the best men? Yet as at present arranged our politics offer a premium for trickery and partisan narrow-mindedness. There is no place in our government for sterling honesty or broad statesmanship.

I do not consider a man great in any sense because he assumes to be; and have little to say about the noisy politicians or egotistical preachers who succeed in building up and keeping up notoriety with their garrulousness and self-aggrandizement. As long as people interest themselves in writing them up and writing them down, so long is food furnished them upon which they will fatten; for the attention of the public is all they ask. The rest of their wants they can supply themselves, after this first and most important one is satisfied. Our wisest men will have to evolute this muddle of conceitedly great, bad men out of their brains before they can reach the acme of their possibilities. Just let this army of human sharks and vampires alone and they will sneak off the stage; and

when they are gone, look out and not let "a more hungry swarm" fill their places.

Men and brethren! why don't you stop and think a moment now and then? Ask of yourselves, What is the need of having all this cumbersome machinery of government? Of what use is the President? Not Grant, Hayes, or Tilden, but of any President? Fifty thousand dollars salary! Why, that would feed and clothe a hundred thousand of our poor starving brothers and sisters, and at the same time save as much more in the expense of courts and prisons for punishing their crimes, — which are not their crimes, but ours, — the legitimate fruit of the conditions into which we have forced them. And all who lend their influence to perpetuate this unwieldy government, which is rotten at the core, take the bread from the man who earns it by his labor, to make richer the office-holders who have already grown fat upon the productions of their constituency. What a useless institution is the United States Senate! What a fraud are our courts of justice! What a commentary upon our boasted government of equal rights is this immense, non-taxable Christian church property!

Those people who absorb our vitality, draw their inspiration from persons in the body; while those in whose presence we never feel weary and exhausted, draw from nature and the invisible world for their physical and spiritual sustenance.

MEDITATIONS.

I looked about me, and saw all the people of the world eating and drinking, sleeping, working, marrying, — exercising by turns the different departments of their natures, and deriving from each a satisfaction, a pleasure, the sum of which is the aggregate of human happiness, and I questioned, What does it all mean?

What becomes of our happiness? Where does it go to, and what is it all for?

And I saw that the blending of the soul and body produces spirit; that from each and every act, each manifestation of the soul through the body, comes a satisfaction which is the spirit of the act, and the spirits of all our acts float together, and form a spiritual body. When this spiritual body is complete, rounded out, full and perfect in every part, the soul lays down the physical body because the spiritual one is better adapted to its use. Then I saw why it was a misfortune to lose, or fail to use, any part of the physical body. The soul being curtailed of its natural means of manifestation, the spiritual body is deficient. Whatever part of our nature is unexercised, fails to contribute to the spiritual body. In the light of this thought, the importance of an equal and harmonious development assumes new magnitude. The success of the specialist becomes the defeat of the spiritual archi-

tect. The man who goes all his life in the tread-mill round of a few faculties, has at death but a fragment of a spiritual brain. His "house not made with hands" is incomplete. Sometimes there is not enough of it for the soul to wake to conscious existence. Consciousness belongs to the external. The individual is not conscious of himself till the soul acts through, or upon, substance, either physical or spiritual. Here is the underlying truth of the old idea of the long sleep preceding the resurrection-day. Conscious life is possible only in action, — motion. The man who is wise, who gives each and every part of his nature equal exercise, each in its turn, passes at once, and with ease, from things physical to things spiritual. Then he hears the full chorus of voices to which, in the body, he has listened one at a time.

Men are in a continual state of unrest, — an uninterrupted demand and supply, a struggle for harmony. But when we reach heaven, whether it be in this world or the next, all our faculties act together, and all receive their satisfaction simultaneously. It is the realization of perfect community toward which we struggle and aspire. All efforts to establish a genuine community between those in whose individual natures it has not developed, must be futile. Such must content themselves with co-operation till they have grown out of their childhood estate into the full proportions of spiritual manhood.

SPIRIT.

In the unexplored universe that surrounds us, there is infinitely more undiscovered truth than has yet become manifest to our consciousness. The realm of spirit is a new world barely discovered to exist, and about which we know no more than Columbus knew about the vast continent whose outlying island he had touched. People who have given attention to the subject, have, as a rule, been much more interested in trying to find out the powers they would possess after death, than in investigating those they possess now. They do not seem to realize that they are spirits now as much as they will ever be. If conscious of a self interior to the body, they have settled it that it can manifest only through the body, and in accordance with *discovered* laws. A preconceived conviction renders one unable to perceive what is fact or truth, so long as it remains in the mind. The chief cause of the limitation of our powers and our wisdom, is our belief that they are limited. The door that leads to the knowledge of spiritual things, and the power of spiritual manifestations, is faith; and, as a class, mankind has no faith, only a superstitious fear.

In the true sense, faith is applicable only to principles and attributes of spirit. If I say I have faith in a person, it only means that I have some evidence that makes me believe he will do certain

things, — pursue a certain course. To have faith in *you*, is the small way of putting it. I have faith in the infinite principles of love and truth and justice that are in you, and from which you cannot escape. We are all in God, in Nature, and are all infilled with the Divine Spirit. No one can exercise faith in the full sense till he accepts Nature, — all that is, as good.

It should not surprise us to find ourselves penetrating into the realm of causes and realities. That is what we were meant to do, and what our natures are fitted for.

We must expect that the conservative element in this as in every age will deny the new discovery. "What! Allow that the earth revolves around the sun? Never! It would upset the whole system of the universe!" So, when I say that I know from repeated experience that it is possible for two people to communicate through miles of space, entirely independent of physical means, — when I say I know that a spirit possesses the power to make itself seen, heard, and felt in a place a thousand miles removed from that which contains the physical body in which it dwells, — I have no doubt many will say, sagaciously, "Imagination!" Pray, sirs, can you tell me just what imagination is?

SPIRITUALISM.

The advent of Spiritualism marked the development in the race of faculties that enabled us to perceive relationships we did not before recognize, — relationships between our individual spirits and the *All* Spirit. It was more the recognition of spirit than of spirits, though the former includes the latter. People embraced Spiritualism or not, according to their stage of development. The first who did so were chiefly among the meek and lowly, as were the first followers of Jesus. It had nothing to do with their being rich or poor, learned or ignorant, but with the rich and learned there was more materiality in the way to hinder their spiritual unfoldment. By Spiritualism I do not mean that when I die I shall go to the "Summer Land" and return to communicate with my friends on earth. I mean the facts of the phenomena, with the intelligence behind them, whatever that is. The various philosophies or theories growing out of it are simply the result of the action of the phenomena upon certain minds, just as Methodism, Calvinism, and other creeds are the result of the action of the recorded facts in the life of Jesus upon certain other minds. The theories of the various writers in Spiritualistic and Christian literature are all of equal value as authority. Spiritualism is not progressive. Its advent was necessitated by a demand

developed in humanity which existing creeds or systems of religion failed to satisfy. It is a form; and, therefore, like Christianity, destined to be outgrown by progressive minds. The chief difference between it and Christianity is that it covers a little more ground, is a little broader, just as Christianity was larger than Judaism. Spiritualism may satisfy the needs of many to-day, but the larger man of to-morrow will need, and therefore will have, something else,—another revelation which will supersede Spiritualism. Whatever is vital in any religion survives all transitions, and the few pearls of truth spoken by Jesus were uttered by inspired minds before him, and are reiterated by mediums to-day. They change not, but the idea they convey to different minds all through the ages, varies according to the unfoldment of capacity to receive and comprehend.

To reach the most perfect development of which a person is capable, it is necessary to work at many kinds of physical, as well as mental, labor. When one has graduated in this school, he regards all kinds of labor with equal respect, and has learned that none is intrinsically drudgery.

PREVISION.

Whatever is to occur exists now potentially — a spiritual reality.

The development of the spiritual senses enables us to discern spiritual things. Just in proportion as we come *en rapport* with wisdom, are we enabled to know all things. I believe this the explanation of certain visions I have of what afterward occurs, rather than that some spirit-friend, perceiving causes that I do not, reasons out their probable result and then impresses it upon my mind. I believe in spirits too; or, rather, I should say, I have knowledge of the existence of individual spirits.

The desire to be told what to do springs from cowardice, — from wanting to shirk the responsibility of ourselves. Spiritualists who ask to be guided by their spirit-friends, do so because they are afraid to take the consequences of acting from their own standpoint.

The same spirit makes Christians call upon Jesus to save them from their sins. The one is no higher than the other, — each seeks to throw the responsibility of his acts, of himself, upon some one else. Both are conditions of spiritual childhood.

MEDIUMSHIP.

Mediumship is a condition of receptivity, of sensitiveness and impressibility, which feels and responds to the vibrations of the spiritual atmosphere. Mediums are not operated upon by spirits to the extent and in the manner that is generally understood. It is *spirit* that inspires the medium; that blends with his own spirit, and gives it increased volume and power. The kind, the character of the communication, depends upon the quality and character of the medium. Mediums may be compared to musical instruments; there are all kinds, from the jew's-harp to the grand organ, and many grades of each kind. Tunes can be played upon all of them, but the sound is determined by the instrument.

I have listened to some profound philosophy from the lips of mediums who were extremely ignorant and uneducated, but never from one who had a small, narrow head, where the intellectual organs were deficient. The capacity must exist, else there is no place in which to receive the influx of spirit.

I have noticed among spiritualists that the lower down a person was in the scale of development, where marvellousness predominated over reason, the more he called for individual spirits, the source being of greater importance in his mind than the

substance. Mediums are outgrowing this as fast as the conditions of ever-recurring demand for individual spirits will allow. From being the mouthpiece of a spirit, they come to be controlled by a band; the band gradually expands to an indefinite number, and, finally, melts into the grand ocean of spirit. Demand creates its own supply, and as long as there is a call for John and Mary, George Washington and Theodore Parker, "Sunflower" and "Snowdrop," those names will be appended to communications; not because mediums are dishonest, but because the demand for personality creates a vibration in the spiritual atmosphere which the sensitive medium feels and responds to.

We have nearly all suffered from the effects of early education in religion. It takes us years to unlearn the false theories of the creation of the world, the fall of man, and the revolting means of salvation which our parents and teachers instilled into our young, receptive minds. In my own childhood's experience, I am ever grateful to the wise and loving invisible intelligence that only suffered my feet to wander a short distance into the great dismal swamp of false Christianity.

"THAT BEAUTIFUL SHORE."

I hear spiritualists and sentimentalists, people with morbid ideality, singing a great deal about "That beautiful shore." I see it would be a good lesson for them to learn that the "beautiful shore" would be no more beautiful to them than this, until they are ready for it. If they should go there, and it should be as beautiful as the garden of Eden, they would see no more beauty there than here. All that class of people are "only waiting"; and when they see what life really is, and what are the means of finding "that beautiful shore," they will see that in so doing they have succumbed to the opposing force, — the adversary. The "waiting" holds them back. I would say, never wait one moment. Heaven is here and everywhere. If you cannot enter, if a weight of inharmony and inability oppress you, don't wait for death to lift the load from your listless spirit. Perhaps it won't. Is it not a childish thought, that dropping our physical bodies will make us wiser, stronger, better, or happier than we now are?

The secret of gaining wisdom is receptivity. We have but to open the doors of our spirit, and it will enter, even as the perfumed air of summer steals in through the open doorway of our dwelling.

SPIRITUAL HEALING.

The healer who observes the phenomena occurring in and through his own organism, becomes more and more conscious of a double identity, — of a more interior self acting independently of the external individuality.

By the external, I mean the whole conscious *I* of man in general. Back of, or interior to this, dawns another consciousness, at once vague and intensely real. I will call it the spirit. This spirit is one with the spirit of the universe, as the drop is one with the ocean. It is in communication with the spirit of all knowledge, of all love, of all power that the universe contains. I know of no limit beyond which we may not draw from these infinite sources. Whether this wealth of resource can reach the outer consciousness and become available to the man, depends upon whether communication can be established between the spirit and the intellect. That is largely dependent upon temperament; upon the sensitiveness of the brain.

Physical disease originates in a disturbance of that delicate medium of communication between the spirit and the body lying interior to the nervous system, and of which we know nothing. That is, the spirit loses partial control of its physical habitation. When the control fails entirely, the spirit quits the body, and that we call death. As nearly

as I can define it, spiritual healing is the *re-enforcement of the spirit* of the sick man, giving it, for the time, added strength to restore harmony in its disordered kingdom. The work of the healer is divided between the inner and outer consciousness. The *I* has to become passive; to yield itself completely and without reserve as a channel for the spirit to flow through.

The work of the will is to put the whole selfish nature in abeyance; to banish fear; to put aside all external interest. Then the spirit assumes supremacy, and reaching one hand in benison to the sufferer, and extending the other in receptivity toward the infinite spirit of the universe, the healing stream flows through him to his needy brother. But sometimes the door to the suffering spirit is closed, — guarded by an egotistic intellect, or spiritual pride, or selfish greed, or educational prejudice. Then the healing current is turned away. It only flows where there is a channel prepared for it. Fraternal sympathy and love must meet its response. It is not a business transaction. The true healer gives of his life and his love; they cannot be bought or sold. In the larger future, healing and its reward will both be spontaneous actions.

WINTER.

The season of winter is analogous to death, or rest, which means freedom from the body for the inner life; rest from the toil and pain of giving action and development to the body, the material covering of the spirit. Most of us are inclined to look forward with a sort of dread to winter, which is because we are out of harmony with nature. We are not willing to let go our hold upon the pleasures of summer-time, so we attempt to turn the course of nature, and keep summer with us always. We labor hard to keep up a little seven-by-nine hot-house, where we can inhale the sickly air from an inharmoniously combined lot of plants and flowers, and rob nature of her beautiful evergreen trees and vines, that they may decay and litter our school-rooms, churches, and public halls, and fill them with disagreeable and unhealthy odors.

To him who truly loves nature, and willingly and trustingly obeys her commandments, no season of the year can afford so much soulful happiness as winter. The breath of spring is sweet, and the kiss of her new-born lips makes us gleeful and happy. The breath of the babe is sweet, and its kiss delights us. But the richness of love — its serene, satisfied, restful happiness — comes when spirit-lips of snowy purity, perfumed with the lily essence of perfected earthly love, meet in the holiness of divine freedom.

PRAYER.

Everything that exists prays continually, unless warped from its natural attitude by interference from without. The mineral prays for a higher life, for transformation into a finer and more exalted state. The vegetable prays for growth and progress. We see the flower turn prayerfully toward the morning light, and gratefully kiss the sunbeams that lovingly come to answer its humble petition.

Each living thing in nature seems satisfied with the good gifts it receives in answer to its prayer, — the supply just equal to the demand, — until we get to man, who, in his selfishness and great ambition, has essayed to take nature's work out of her hands, and so has almost lost sight of true prayer.

No manifestation of the human soul is more false than that which is called "prayer." Every prayer that was ever written or spoken, in study or pulpit, by minister or layman, is a worthless counterfeit. A real prayer very rarely finds expression in words. I can conceive of the possibility of a soul being so filled with the inflowing streams of celestial response to all his needs, that a spontaneous breathing forth of low, sweet, musical words of reverential asking and grateful acceptance might be a manifestation of prayer; but this can seldom occur.

Pulpit praying can do no more towards supplying my spiritual needs than the eating of a dinner by

my neighbor can supply my physical demand for food. Nature has given each individual a prayerful spirit, which, dwelling in freedom, acts continually in harmony with her laws.

The spiritual element in conjugal love supplies to the outward form of the loved one all the charms that are in harmony with the beautiful individuality which inspires the affection, in the same manner that the passionate lover of physical beauty invests the beloved with all those graces of character that seem to him in harmony with the beautiful exterior.

The one, beginning within, unfolds to the outward; the other reverses the process, time peeling off husk after husk, till the reality, whatever it may be, is revealed.

The unfolded spiritual vision sees the beautiful thought of the Creator, and in that delight loses sight of accidental imperfections in its expression. The world bows to the beauty of the Venus de Milo in spite of its mutilation.

TO-DAY'S INNERMOST THOUGHTS.

February 1, 1878.

When I am the best I ever am, I know just enough to know that I want a God, — a great Spirit to surround and hold ours, — in whom we live, and from whom there is no escape. That is to me the Father, and satisfies my necessity for care, protection, and guardianship. I could always see God in nature when I was a little boy, — in every leaf and blade of grass, and looked reverently upon them. I felt when I plucked them that I was meddling with God. By this power I was willingly moulded. I was not only willing the flowers should excite my ideality, and the pine-trees my reverence, that the mountains should waken my sublimity, and the stars stimulate my spirituality, but I was full of gratitude for their lessons, and for all the lessons that came to me through nature and through men; but I always naturally and involuntarily rebelled against all human authority. Even when I seemed subdued, and acted the part of a slave, my spirit rebelled. That a man should presume to mark out a path for my feet in accordance with his little perceptions of right, I felt in the depths of my being to be an impertinent usurpation. I did not feel angry towards my oppressors individually, but so strong was my rebellion, that I think, but for a feeling of tenderness and some inherited caution, I

should have just killed them, — kindly but effectually put them out of my way.

I have no ideal of what the system of things should be. Others may have their theories of what is right and what is beautiful; may draft the plan for "the great community" of the future. I am incapable of it, because I see that God has already done it, and that we have only to fall into line and follow his leading. I accept the facts of nature, whatever they are, and test my ideas by them, instead of testing them by my ideas. This, then, is my ideal,—God,—the facts of nature,—all of them, —toads, lizards, doves, men, and angels. One is just as good as another; and all together they are God. Externally I hate a toad, because I was born with that aversion; but my spirit looks upon a toad with love and reverence as part of God.

When a child, my good old grandmother told me that if I went to church I should hear the minister tell all about God. So, though but seven years old, I eagerly walked three miles alone, and but half-clad, and stole timidly in. I listened with breathless attention while the preacher read from a book he called the Word of God, and then while he did something he called praying to God, and followed closely every word of his sermon about God; and though I went home with a feeling of disappointment lying heavy at my heart, I followed it up with all the earnestness of my intense nature. I went to Sunday school, because they told me that there I should find a man who would teach me about

God. I continued my attendance until I found the God they talked about was not the God whose voice I had heard under his own starry dome, and then I returned joyfully, even in my disappointment, to my first teachers. It was a valuable lesson to me, because then I knew the difference between the pigmy God of man's creation and God himself.

My intuition carries me to the limit of my possibilities of comprehending the universe, — and that is my God; and then it tells me that there is infinitely more that I do not comprehend. My God increases day by day as my capacity enlarges, and I know I shall have a grander God to-morrow than I have to-day. I know through faith. That is, faith is the door through which I have entered into this knowledge. I never bow down and humble myself before my God. That seems to me an abnormal action of the organ of veneration. When I have the grandest conception of spiritual things, when I am the most deeply penetrated with a sense of infinite goodness and wisdom and power, I feel the least like prostrating myself in worship. I am elevated into a state of harmony with these spiritual realities, and I look up and down, to the right and to the left, to find God, and feel myself on an equality, as one with him.

The lesson that I want to learn most, for it comprehends all that I need to learn, is to labor to-day with love and gratitude and enjoyment, and to-night leave it forever. If I am mowing my meadow, I

want to do it joyfully, taking pleasure in the beauty of the flowers, the songs of the birds, and the sweet breath of the grass; and then if I fall down in death as I give the last swing to my scythe, I want to do that just as joyfully.

The fact is, we have lost sight of our precious inheritance of faith, and in its place have only a dead-letter of belief. We do not trust God to decide when the special work of our life is complete, — when our journey is ended. He will be sure to put on the brakes at the right time. That is where the foolishness comes in on our part; we might just as well be willing, for he will do it anyway.

I want to have as much trust as the flowers and trees. If a seed is dropped in the road, it comes up just as hopefully as if dropped in a field with a fence twenty feet high around it; and it grows just as sweetly. Perhaps no foot will tread upon it till it gets to be three or four inches high; and then, if the life is not all crushed out of it, it rises up again and goes on growing just the best it can. We walk through the field and every step is on some living thing.

So God — the power that is a greater power than we — walks over us. We make ourselves miserable trying to escape his tread. When we go right along, without a thought of escape, we are laying up treasures in heaven. There is scarcely any of this spirit born into the world yet. That which has helped me to grow more than all things else,

has been an illumination — an inspiration — which, at times, has enabled me to walk right along, doing whatever my nature spontaneously prompted me to do, without a thought of consequences, without a desire to escape them.

It is thought that growth comes through suffering; but I think suffering is not the cause of growth, — only incidental to it. When the great omnipotent power draws the cord of life to greater tension, it gives us finer power; that is, we ascend the scale of soul manifestation. The vibrations of the human instrument become more rapid, the tone it gives forth grows clearer and finer, till at last the limit of endurance is reached and the cord snaps. That is death.

This great power that is tuning us into harmony with the universe is the most worthy of worship of anything we know of, for there is absolutely no escaping it, or outwitting it. Yet we foolishly spend our lives struggling against it, and it is this struggle that produces suffering. I want to yield gladly, in the spirit of reverent love, to this Omnipotence. If it turns the screw, let it turn. If death comes toward me, let it come. I will float with the stream of God's purposes, not fight against them. Many times has his finger drawn my life-cord to utmost tension, yet broken it not. What I am, what I know, what power I possess beyond other men, is due to these exceptional experiences. For except ye die, ye cannot be born again. Come, then, death, my friend,

when thou wilt. Touch me with thy hand, and try if my spirit is yet ripe; then pass by or take me with thee, as is meet. Thou, too, art one of the facts of beneficent nature, art part of my God.

MY ASPIRATION.

The greatest reward I pray to realize in this life for all the toil and pain that assuming an individual human existence involves, — the highest and grandest condition I desire to attain on earth, — is that of a pure, noble, sweet, lovable old man. An old man with a large heart full of clean, rich, ripened thought, and a spirit that breathes its generous love upon all and everything it meets. I would have my inner life so full of tenderness and beauty that the external would be correspondingly beautiful, — that my breath would be sweet, my skin clean and soft, and my flesh partaking of that odorous freshness and fascinating perfume of the healthful babe's. I would have expressive, tender, loving eyes, and my voice should be as soft and magnetic as the robin's last autumn song. The children should all love me, and, as I walked in the street or field, should gather around me and joyously clasp my thin, white fingers in their soft little hands, and when I sat down to rest they should climb upon my

knee, and play with my fine, long hair and silvery beard.

Yes, I ask not that the name of king or lord, president or senator, pope or reverend shall commend me to the honor and respect of my fellowmen when the sunset of life draws near. Nothing short of being a pure, noble, sweet, lovable old man will fill the measure of my aspiration, — my prayer.

Now, as I look around me, above and below, I see only one object that so fully and completely commands my reverence and my purest affection, and that is a sweet, tender, loving, motherly old woman.

I know that there is a strait and narrow path that leads to the fountain of wisdom, compared with which the keenest and most practical intellectual processes are as starlight to sunlight. No words of explanation from one who has trodden this divine pathway can induct another therein. Only by association can he assist in the necessary development.

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